

Human needs approach to ageing in urban environments

Northern Dimension Future Forum: Healthy Ageing

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DWELLERS IN AGILE CITIES

DWELLERS IN AGILE CITIES:

CITIES ARE NOT CITIES WITHOUT DWELLERS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

- [A research consortium funded by Academy of Finland, Strategic Research Council 2016-2019](#)
- Sub-project on social diversity:
 - Needs based experiments with vulnerable groups: migrant youth, NEET, older residents with care needs
 - Action oriented participatory design to achieve embodied and discursive knowledge on housing and living of these groups
 - Detailed understanding on social and cultural diversity and vulnerability in urban context, and on the needs of housing and living in the city

HUMAN NEEDS APPROACH: CRITICS

- In general, urban policies/ planning/ governance aim to address local needs
 - But, does the general/ professional understanding of needs meet the needs of the citizens? And the needs of vulnerable groups in particular?
- From an individual perspective needs are often associated with wants
 - How to distinguish between these two? Does it really matter?

HUMAN NEEDS APPROACH: A WAY FORWARD

- Needs are universal 'preconditions for effective participation in any form of social life' (Gough 2017)
- Needs are essential for human action:
 - For creating aims: ability to make choices
 - For understanding how to meet them: ability to design
 - For achieving them in the practice: ability of do
- Human needs are
 - Social participation
 - Health
 - Critical autonomy
- Human needs can not be met universally across cultures and times
 - The question is: What is required to encourage, establish and sustain human action in society?
 - The answer is: A combination of contextual everyday life knowledge and more universal professional knowledge

EXPERIMENTS

- How to provide knowledge on diversity of needs and need-based solutions to urban governance?
- In this presentation I will focus on three experiments we have done with older people from Tampere:
 - Memory group discussions
 - Living the City Map (APP)
 - Cook Book on Housing (APP)